

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0917**

March 10, 2017

President Donald Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

I am proposing a solution to expedite needed federal investments in our country's aging infrastructure by establishing limited exceptions to the earmark moratorium for vetted water resources development projects of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. My proposal will allow us to work together to prioritize funding for projects already scrutinized for their scientific and economic merit – **all without increasing our current level of spending by one cent.**

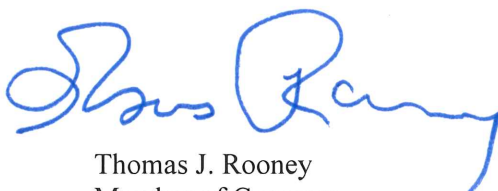
Our nation's economy depends on the work of the Corps, which maintains over a thousand of our ports and 25 thousand miles of commercial inland waterways serving 40 states. In our western states, Reclamation facilities deliver water to one out of every five western farmers who grow 60 percent of our nation's vegetables. In the newly-released 2017 Infrastructure Report Card, which evaluates the condition and performance of America's infrastructure, the American Society of Civil Engineers assigned our nation's dams, inland waterways, ports and levees a collective D+.

In my own backyard, the Corps is 100 percent responsible for the funding, construction and maintenance of the Herbert Hoover Dike, which protects communities around Lake Okeechobee from flooding. Florida experienced its wettest dry season since 1932 last year, which forced the Corps to authorize large-scale discharges of fresh water out toward the coasts, resulting in algae blooms that made national news. Over the past few years, the Corps has requested roughly half of the funding required for it to complete the repairs necessary to prevent the aging Dike from catastrophic failure – yet, the earmark ban prohibits me from doing anything about it. Detractors like Senator Jeff Flake may not think that the people in his state care if a faceless bureaucrat does his job for him, but I do.

Across the country, there are ports that require dredging and outdated flood control structures awaiting life-saving repairs that have state and local funding sources lined up, but are still waiting for the feds to pay their fair share. The impact of routinely underfunding critical infrastructure like the Herbert Hoover Dike is not just to public safety, but it ends up costing taxpayers more money in the long-run. For example, from 2005 to 2016, the Corps received \$31 billion in emergency funding to respond to natural disasters on top of its regular \$55 billion budget over that same time period.

I believe Congress can prove to the American people that we can be trusted to spend their tax dollars responsibly and ethically. Six years into the earmark ban, we're still blaming the symptoms of Washington's dysfunction on a fictitious boogeyman rather than a few bad actors who exploited our institutions for personal gain. Many so-called conservatives claim that those of us advocating to restore Congress' Article I authority are driven by power and greed, hiding our true intentions. Yes it may be politically risky to suggest that politicians and earmarks should be trusted in a room together again—but I think it's riskier to continue the broken status quo for political expediency.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Rooney  
Member of Congress